

and (3) in Fig. 11 is replaced by data of intermediate file format such as EMF format.

According to the control of the second embodiment, it is possible to simplify the designing of the system as well as maintain the order of the pages of the distributed job in each printer. As a result, the collection of printouts obtained by distributed printing is facilitated.

The aforesaid first and second embodiments describe distributed jobs obtained by dividing a single print job for a plurality of ranges of pages. However, the present invention is not limited to this and applicable to a variety of print jobs accompanied by distributed printing by number of copies or other substitute processes. For instance, for controlling each of three printers (printer A of the face-down ejection type, printer B of the face-down ejection type, and printer C of the face-up ejection type) to perform distributed printing to print 3 copies, when a malfunction occurs in printer B during printing the third copy, printer C is controlled to print one more copy in place of printer B. This control facilitates the collection of the printouts produced by printers A, B and C.

In accordance with the embodiment as described above, the following advantages are obtained:

(1) By outputting a page for which printing has failed to any bin of any designated printer or to a

printer other than one specified for distributed printing, it is possible to prevent mixing of the type in which a page that is reprinted becomes mixed in with other pages.

5           (2) A job for which printing has failed is re-introduced to a printer that output the preceding pages of the document. Further, if printing of a job that includes the first page fails, then the job is re-introduced to the printer that output the final page.

10 As a result, the collection of printouts obtained by distributed printing is facilitated and the order of the pages is maintained. This makes sorting very easy.

          (3) A job for which printing has failed is re-introduced to a printer that output the succeeding pages

15 of the document. Further, if printing of a job that includes the final page fails, then the job is re-introduced to the printer that output the first page.

As a result, the collection of printouts obtained by distributed printing is facilitated and the order of the

20 pages is maintained. This makes sorting very easy.

          (4) Whether a printer is of the face-up ejection type or face-down ejection type is detected and a job is re-introduced to whichever printer is appropriate of the printers that output the pages before or after all pages

25 that were to be output to the printer that malfunctioned. As a result, it is possible to assure that the pages of the printouts will be in the proper

order, the collection of printouts obtained by distributed printing is facilitated and so is sorting.

(5) A print job comprising only pages for which printing failed is generated and printing is performed again. This makes it possible to avoid multiple printing of the same page. Furthermore, the type of paper ejection of a printer which developed a malfunction is determined, and if it is of the face-up ejection type, then it is determined whether a printer that output the preceding part of a job is of the face-down ejection type. If this printer is of the face-down ejection type, then this printer is made the destination of printing. Whereas, if printer which developed the malfunction is of the face-down ejection type, then it is determined whether a printer that output the latter part of a job is of the face-up ejection type. If this printer is of the face-up ejection type, then this printer is made the destination of printing. This facilitates the collection and sorting of printouts.

Thus, as described above, there can be provided a distributed printing system for performing distributed printing by a plurality of printers or devices having a printer function, wherein the system is controlled in such a manner that printouts can be collected and put into proper order easily even in a case where a problem has occurred in any of the printers or devices during printing.